Ninth Grade Summer Reading

Welcome to the 9th grade, and congratulations on entering high school!

You will be closely assessed on your summer reading, and this is the first big grade of your high school English class. You will spend at least three weeks going over these books. Read them carefully. Annotation is strongly recommended.

**Required book #1: *The Last Book in the Universe***

**Summary:** This fast-paced action novel is set in a future where the world has been almost destroyed. It's the story of an epileptic teenager nicknamed Spaz, who begins the heroic fight to bring human intelligence back to the planet. In a world where most people are plugged into brain-drain entertainment systems, Spaz is the rare human being who can see life as it really is. When he meets an old man called Ryter, he begins to learn about Earth and its past. With Ryter as his companion, Spaz sets off an unlikely quest to save his dying sister -- and in the process, perhaps the world.

**Required book #2: A dystopian novel**

Choose **one** of these five books if you are taking English 9. They are arranged roughly in order of difficulty, from easiest to hardest:

1. *Steelheart* by Brandon Sanderson
2. *Love is the Drug* by Alaya Dawn Johnson
3. *The Testing* by Joelle Charbonneau
4. *The Knife of Never Letting Go* by Patrick Ness
5. *Ready Player One* by Ernest Cline

***1. Steelheart***

How far would you go for revenge if someone killed your father? If someone destroyed your city? If everything you ever loved was taken from you?

David Charleston will go to any lengths to stop Steelheart. But to exact revenge in Steelheart’s world, David will need the Reckoners—a shadowy group of rebels bent on maintaining justice.

And it turns out that the Reckoners might just need David too.

***2. Love is the Drug***

Emily Bird was raised not to ask questions. She has perfect hair, the perfect boyfriend, and a perfect Ivy-League future. But a chance meeting with Roosevelt David, a homeland security agent, at a party for Washington D.C.'s elite leads to Bird waking up in a hospital, days later, with no memory of the end of the night.

Meanwhile, the world has fallen apart: A deadly flu virus is sweeping the nation, forcing quarantines, curfews, even martial law. And Roosevelt is certain that Bird knows something. Something about the virus--something about her parents' top-secret scientific work--something she shouldn't know.

The only one Bird can trust is Coffee, a quiet, outsider genius who deals drugs to their classmates and is a firm believer in conspiracy theories. And he believes in Bird. But as Bird and Coffee dig deeper into what really happened that night, Bird finds that she might know more than she remembers. And what she knows could unleash the biggest government scandal in U.S. history.

***3. The Testing***

It’s graduation day for sixteen-year-old Malencia Vale, and the entire Five Lakes Colony (the former Great Lakes) is celebrating. All Cia can think about—hope for—is whether she’ll be chosen for The Testing, a United Commonwealth program that selects the best and brightest new graduates to become possible leaders of the slowly revitalizing post-war civilization. When Cia is chosen, her father finally tells her about his own nightmarish half-memories of The Testing. Armed with his dire warnings (”Cia, trust no one”), she bravely heads off to Tosu City, far away from friends and family, perhaps forever. Danger, romance—and sheer terror—await.

***4. The Knife of Never Letting Go***

Todd Hewitt is the only boy in a town of men. Ever since the settlers were infected with the Noise germ, Todd can hear everything the men think, and they hear everything he thinks. Todd is just a month away from becoming a man, but in the midst of the cacophony, he knows that the town is hiding something from him -- something so awful Todd is forced to flee with only his dog, whose simple, loyal voice he hears too. With hostile men from the town in pursuit, the two stumble upon a strange and eerily silent creature: a girl. Who is she? Why wasn't she killed by the germ like all the females on New World? Propelled by Todd's gritty narration, readers are in for a white-knuckle journey in which a boy on the cusp of manhood must unlearn everything he knows in order to figure out who he truly is.

***5. Ready Player One:***

***\*This book contains adult themes and some adult language***

In the year 2044, reality is an ugly place. The only time teenage Wade Watts really feels alive is when he's jacked into the virtual utopia known as the OASIS. Wade's devoted his life to studying the puzzles hidden within this world's digital confines—puzzles that are based on their creator's obsession with the pop culture of decades past and that promise massive power and fortune to whoever can unlock them.

But when Wade stumbles upon the first clue, he finds himself beset by players willing to kill to take this ultimate prize. The race is on, and if Wade's going to survive, he'll have to win—and confront the real world he's always been so desperate to escape.

***Note for all:*** You must also read two books of your choice from the summer reading list for either middle school or high school.

***Note for* *English 9 Honors* *students:*** Your fifth dystopian choice novel is *The Chrysalids* rather than *Steelheart*. You **must** **also** read *Lord of the Flies.*

*\*All book summaries are pulled from Amazon.com*